DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 314 088 IR 053 039

AUTHOR Mulcahy, Kevin
TITLE Reference Collection Policy Statement: Alexander Library.
PUB DATE Apr 88
NOTE 41p.
PUB TYPE Legal/Legislative/Regulatory Materials (090) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Libraries; *Administrative Policy; Art; Bibliographic Databases; Business; Higher Education; *Library Collection Development; Music; Online Systems; *Organizational Objectives; Philosophy; *Reference Materials; Scientific and Technical Information; Users (Information)
IDENTIFIERS *Rutgers the State University NJ

ABSTRACT

This policy statement begins by presenting the objectives of the Reference Collection Policy for Rutgers University's Alexander Library: (1) to describe the current state of the collection; (2) to articulate the goals of the collection; and (3) to provide users of the library with a clear and concise explanation of what is and is not included in the reference collection, and why. The institutional setting of the library and the organization of the reference collection are then described. An explanation of selection methods is followed by a description of collection principles (e.g., currency, duplication, and quality of resources); selection notes for 20 types of materials by format (e.g., almanacs, bibliographies, and book review sources); notes on special policy considerations for automated formats (e.g., online databases); and selection notes by subject for art, business, education, music, philosophy, and science. Statistics on the number of holdings and the breakdown of materials in individual subject areas are presented in tables. Two appendixes list graduate programs served by Alexander Library and programs of studies for liberal arts students. (SD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED314088

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

REFERENCE COLLECTION POLICY STATEMENT

ALEXANDER LIBRARY

Prepared by Kevin Mulcahy
Reference Coordinator

IR053039

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Kevin Mulcahy

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Table of Contents

I	Introduction	p. 1
II	The Institutional Setting	p. 2
III	Reference Collection Organization	p. 3
IV	Selection Methods	p. 4
V	Reference Collection Principles	pp. 5-10
VI	Selection Notes--Materials by Format	pp. 11-19
VII	Selection Notes--Automated Formats	pp. 20-22
VIII	Graduate & Undergraduate Programs at Rutgers: Appendices 1 & 2	pp. 23-24
IX	Selection Notes by Subject: Introduction	p. 25
	A. Art	
	B. Business	
	C. Education	
	D. Music	
	E. Philosophy	
	F. Science	

REFERENCE COLLECTION POLICY STATEMENT

ALEXANDER LIBRARY

The objectives of the Reference Collection Policy for Alexander Library are: first, to describe the current state of the collection; second, to articulate the goals of the collection; and third, to provide users of the library with a clear and concise explanation of what is and is not included in the reference collection--and why.

1. Describing the current state of the collection involves answering a number of questions. What subject areas are covered? What is the level of coverage for each area? What kinds of formats are included in the collection? What are the past and present methods of selection, evaluation, and maintenance? Who is responsible for selection, evaluation, and maintenance? Who are the primary and secondary users of the collection? What is the relationship of the reference collection to other collections within Alexander--the circulating collection, serials, microforms, media, government documents, etc.?

2. Articulating the goals of the collection must of course depend on a comprehensive knowledge of the current state of the collection, but it also demands a clear sense of the goals (and the current state) of the parent institution. The reference collection does not exist in isolation; it is part of Alexander Library, which is in turn a part of the Rutgers University Library system, which is itself a part of the University as a whole. And in a time of shared resources and cooperative collection development, it is important to remember that the reference collection is ultimately a part of the whole network of research libraries. Thus the larger goals of the University and the library system and the local goals of Alexander Library exert the major influence on the goals of the reference collection. The audience served by the reference collection, the subject areas covered, and the budgetary emphases may all be radically changed by shifts in planning on the library-wide or university-wide level. A good policy, therefore must be sensitive to the directions in which the parent institution plans to move. And a good policy will help to guide, in both general and specific ways, the selection and maintenance of the reference collection.

3. A collection policy is, of course, in part a public relations document. The library's patrons--faculty, students, and administrators--have every right to know what the collection is likely to hold. And a collection policy is also in large part a budget document. Ideally, it will serve as a justification of the library's expenditures for reference materials, and as an argument for increased funding when necessary.

Rutgers University is one of the largest (more than 47,000 students) and one of the best state universities in the United States. It is, moreover, the stated goal of the University to become one of the pre-eminent public universities in the country and the world. The substantial progress already made in achieving this goal was marked in early 1989 by the admission of Rutgers to the select Association of American Universities. The libraries have played, and will continue to play, a crucial role in the attainment of the university's goal by supporting research and instruction and by helping to attract the very best scholars and students.

The task of the libraries is complicated by the university's geographic decentralization. The university has widely separated campuses in Newark, New Brunswick, and Camden. While the great majority of the doctoral programs are located in New Brunswick, a significant degree of duplication of programs of study--and thus of library resources--exists among these three campus locations. To further complicate matters, there are five campuses within the New Brunswick area--Busch, College Avenue, Cook, Douglass, and Kilmer--and while there is some measure of specialization by the different campuses (for example, most research programs in the Sciences are located on Busch Campus), some degree of duplication of courses and library resources remains.

Alexander Library is the principal humanities and social sciences research library for the university. Since 1988 it has served, in effect, as the flagship library of the newly formed Humanities and Social Sciences Research Libraries (HSSRL)--comprised of the Art Library, the Laurie Music Library, the East Asian Library, Special Collections and Archives, the Institute of Management and Labor Relations Library, and the Center for Urban Policy Research Library, as well as Alexander itself. Alexander is the oldest and the largest of the Rutgers libraries, with holdings of more than 900,000 books, nearly 8000 serial subscriptions, and a reference collection of nearly 23,000 volumes.

The role of Alexander Library within the library system is complex and at times ambiguous. While it is the principal library for humanities and social sciences, its mission is profoundly affected by the presence of several highly specialized libraries--for example, the Art Library, the Music Library, and the East Asian Library. Because of the proximity of these libraries, Alexander does not collect heavily in the subject areas covered by the specialized libraries. In addition, responsibility for maintaining the principal business collection in the New Brunswick area has begun to shift to the Kilmer Area Library (primarily because that library is closer to the newly created School of Business), which will significantly alter Alexander's collecting practices over the next several years. On the other hand, the absence of a specific undergraduate library on the College Avenue Campus leaves Alexander as the library responsible for providing services and collections for undergraduates as well as for faculty, graduate students, and other researchers. All of these local circumstances are taken into account in shaping the guidelines for Alexander Library's reference collection.

The primary clientele of Alexander Library, then, is drawn from the faculty, students, and staff of the Graduate School in New Brunswick, the Graduate School of Education, the Graduate School of Social Work, the

School of Communication, Information, and Library Studies, the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology (which relies more heavily on the Library of Science and Medicine), and from the faculty, students, and staff of undergraduate programs in New Brunswick. (Lists of the graduate and undergraduate programs served by Alexander are included as Appendixes 1 & 2). In addition, the library plays a key role in a state network of libraries and in the larger community of research libraries.

(5/89)

REFERENCE COLLECTION ORGANIZATION

There are actually several reference collections within the Alexander Library building--reference areas in the East Asian Library, the Department of Special Collections and Archives, and Government Publications. These are separately administered collections with specific missions and their own budgets. While Documents shares a common service point with the general reference collection, the others maintain their own staffs and reference desks. The concern of this policy, however, is with the general reference collection of Alexander Library (subsequently called Reference), housed on the first floor of the library. It is a single integrated collection; that is, there are no separate collections for the humanities or social sciences or business, and there is only one service point.

The reference collection is supervised by a reference coordinator, who has the primary responsibility for the selection, maintenance, and evaluation of the collection; for scheduling the reference desk; and hiring, training, and supervising information assistants (graduate students who are used to provide additional service at the reference desk). The coordinator also supervises one staff member and any work study students assigned to him in the processing of reference materials, shelving and filing, maintaining records (including a reference shelflist, an order file, a new books list, etc.), pre-order searching, and evaluating the collection. The coordinator in turn reports to Alexander Library's Assistant Director for Public Services and serves as a member of the Collection Development Group.

SELECTION METHODS

The practice at Alexander Library has been for one member of the Information Services Department (currently the Reference Coordinator) to assume primary responsibility for reference book selection. Until 1985, Information Services did not have a separate book budget, so the reference selector could only recommend titles to the appropriate subject bibliographer. Now there is, in effect, a reference bibliographer with a separate budget and a considerable degree of autonomy in selecting.

Within the Information Services Department there is relatively little formal structure--no committee of librarians voting on each book. In practice, however, there is a good deal of informal consultation between the reference bibliographer and other members of the department. Each department member is assigned a particular subject area in which he or she is encouraged to participate in selection and evaluation. The Alexander Librarian must approve any purchases costing more than $300.00 and helps to articulate the overall goals of the collection.

Methods

1. Selecting books arriving on approval plans or blanket orders to be cataloged to Reference.

2. Reading review sources such as Choice on a regular basis and selecting appropriate titles.

3. Reviewing standard guides like ARBA or subject bibliographies for titles previously overlooked.

4. Examining publishers' catalogs and mailings.

5. Faculty and student recommendations--solicited and unsolicited.

6. Recommendations of other librarians both within and without the Information Services Department--in particular the subject bibliographers.

7. Perceived need--based on questions asked at the Reference Desk that cannot be answered easily (or at all) with the current collection; and on the development of newly created or upgraded programs for which inadequate sources exist in the current collection.

8. Monitoring the reference collection on an ongoing basis (by inventorying and shelfreading) to identify titles that need to be replaced by new editions or more up-to-date equivalents.

In all cases the bibliographer should rely on his or her judgment of whether the material under consideration is appropriate for the Alexander reference collection based on the Collection Policy and the Alexander Library Mission Statement.

1. Currency

Timeliness or currency is important for any library collection, but it is essential for a reference collection. Certain kinds of information enjoy their greatest value--in some cases virtually their only value--when they are most up-to-date. Reference patrons often need the latest demographic data, the current address of a prominent figure, the most recent articles on a major political event, or the current status of a key piece of legislation. A reference collection unable to provide such information is to some extent deficient; a collection frequently unable to answer such questions is simply inadequate. Of course the inherent delays in the dissemination of printed, microform, and even online sources create an inescapable limitation on currency; the library's acquisition and processing procedures should be designed to keep those delays to the absolute minimum.

In practice, this need for current information requires a considerable investment of time and money--time spent identifying and acquiring the latest information available and money spent to update the collection constantly. Some general guidelines can be articulated. Directories, yearbooks, and other annuals should be purchased every year. Encyclopedias, dictionaries, handbooks, and other irregular publications should be made available to library patrons in their most recent editions. When a particular title is not itself updated for a considerable period, the bibliographer should search for works of comparable scope and authority that are more up-to-date. Indexes, abstracts, and bibliographies should be purchased at the shortest intervals--e.g. monthly rather than waiting for the annual cumulation, or annually rather than quinquennially (though the cumulations should also be purchased for the sake of ease of use).

Given the budgetary constraints which are always, to a greater or lesser degree, present in any library, some compromises will have to be made. Alexander Library, for instance, currently purchases five multi-volume English language encyclopedias, all of which are updated annually. To purchase all five sets each year would be prohibitively expensive, especially when the actual changes from year to year are relatively minor. Thus the practice at Alexander is to rotate the purchase of new sets over a three year period so that at least one set is available in the latest printing, and none is more than three years old. A similar rotation can be developed in any area in which the collection enjoys some redundancy (that is, the presence of two or more titles of comparable scope, authority and quality). Moreover, only every second edition of an especially expensive reference set that changes little from edition to edition might be purchased (e.g. Gale's Government Research Centers Directory). The bibliographer should be extremely cautious about such compromises. It would be appropriate, in such cases, to consult with other members of the department and the subject bibliographer most likely to be interested in that work. It would also be wise to look beyond Alexander to the other Rutgers libraries and explore methods of cooperative collection.

Standing orders should be placed for titles the library wishes to receive on a regular basis. When titles are not on standing order, the reference bibliographer should make every effort to find out when newer

editions are published. Familiarity with the reviewing literature, regular inventorying and weeding will all facilitate this effort, but it is also important to enlist the aid of other members of the department and the subject bibliographers, all of whom will have subject expertise that should prove invaluable. Librarians should be encouraged to bring outdated or new titles to the attention of the reference bibliographer, who should respond quickly to all suggestions.

The increasing availability of online or CD-ROM versions of traditional reference sources is bound to have a major impact on collection practices. These sources will be discussed at length elsewhere in this policy, but it should be noted that one of the key advantages to be looked for in such automated reference sources is increased timeliness. Automated sources that are significantly more timely than printed sources must be considered strong candidates for acquisition.

2. REDUNDANCY

Redundancy in a reference collection might be roughly defined as the availability of two or more sources that provide the answer to a particular question. More precisely, redundancy might be defined as the practice of buying two or more titles of comparable scope, comprehensiveness, and authority. It is easy to distinguish between redundancy and duplication: duplication would involve buying two copies of the Encyclopaedia Britannica; redundancy would involve buying one copy of Britannica and one of Encyclopedia Americana.

As the previous example suggests, any library will exhibit some measure of redundancy--two or more comparable encyclopedias, two or more comparable dictionaries, Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature and General Periodicals Index. No matter how similar the two titles are, normally each will contain factual information, opinions, citations, or perspectives that the other does not. Thus buying both of the titles allows the library to make available to its public a larger proportion of the universe of knowledge than merely buying one title would. At the same time, the basic similarity of the two titles frequently makes it possible for two people with similar information needs to be satisfied simultaneously. In short, more information is available, and it is available with less frustration and inconvenience.

Where is redundancy appropriate in the Alexander reference collection? How much redundancy is appropriate? Certainly, given the library's current function as the undergraduate library for the College Avenue Campus, a good deal of redundancy is needed in general reference areas--dictionaries, encyclopedias, almanacs, yearbooks, biographical dictionaries, indexes, etc. Moreover, since Alexander also serves as the University's research library in the humanities and social sciences, considerable redundancy is also appropriate in those disciplines offered as undergraduate majors and graduate degree programs (See the attached list of undergraduate majors and graduate programs served by Alexander Library). Little or no redundancy is needed, however, in subject areas primarily served by other libraries or collections in the Rutgers system. The sciences are a good example of an area in which Alexander would want no more than one good general encyclopedia. The exact degree of redundancy in any subject area must be determined by several factors, including the size and degree level of the program served, the librarians' perception of the demand for reference materials within that discipline, the existence of other libraries or collections serving that discipline, the actual availability of sources within that field (perhaps there is only one subject encyclopedia), and of course the budget.

3. DUPLICATION

Given the ever-increasing cost of books and the usual availability of a variety of similar sources, there should be relatively little duplication of titles in the reference collection. The reference bibliographer should instead purchase other works of comparable scope and comprehensiveness in those areas where use is the greatest. The collection, that is, should be characterized by redundancy, not duplication.

Exceptions will include many of the titles in the Ready Reference collection at the reference desk--basic almanacs, directories, language dictionaries (English and bilingual), style manuals, and perhaps a few other inexpensive but heavily used items. Major sets should not be duplicated unless there are compelling reasons for doing so, and any such decisions should be made by the department as a whole.

4. Quality

It is little more than a truism to state that a reference collection (or any other collection) should contain works of the highest quality. The needs of the community served by the collection and the inevitable limitations of money and space all argue for great care in selecting titles. But providing a working definition of quality can be more difficult than merely paying lip service to the notion of quality, and there may be occasions when stringent criteria for quality must be relaxed in light of other considerations.

A. Criteria

1. Ease of Use. Is there an index? Is the caliber of indexing high? Is the volume clearly and logically organized? Are the user instructions clear and helpful? Are abbreviations and symbols explained? Are there adequate cross references? Is the work clearly written?

2. Physical Quality. Is the print legible? How good are any reproductions or maps? Is the volume well bound and durable?

3. Currency. Is the information timely? Note that copyright dates can be misleading; a book published in 1987 might contain articles written in 1980 with little or no subsequent revision, or it might contain data several years out of date (for a clue, check any bibliographies included--a lack of current citations is often a tip off). Are there comparable works that are more up-to-date? Is the subject of the book such that currency is not terribly significant?

4. Accuracy. Is the information provided accurate? Are there critical omissions?

5. Authority/Reputation. Are the authors (or editors) and publishers highly regarded? Is this a field in which they have produced standard works? Do they enjoy a reputation for quality and reliability?

6. Comprehensiveness/Scope. Is the coverage provided sufficiently broad and detailed for the collection's users?

7. How does the work compare with other works in the same field? Are works currently owned by the collection or currently available for purchase equal or superior to the work under consideration?

The problem with such criteria is actually applying them in the library situation.

B. Problems

1. Although it is clearly difficult to evaluate a book according to these criteria without having the book in hand, normally a bibliographer does not see the book until it has already been purchased. And return is not always feasible. One can, however, at least make decisions on whether to continue a subscription or to order

subsequent editions by inspecting earlier volumes.

2. Although reviews are perhaps the primary source for evaluation, many books, especially by small publishers, are not reviewed.

3. The delay in the appearance of reviews adds to the delay between publication of a book and its availability to library users. In some cases the useful shelf life of a reference book may have significantly diminished by the time a librarian reads one or more reviews, orders the book, and finally makes it available to patrons.

4. Reviews themselves are inevitably subjective, and while in some cases multiple reviews can be checked, that process only increases the delay between publication and availability.

C. At times, it may be appropriate to purchase materials of uncertain quality--that is, materials for which no reviews are as yet available and which have not been personally evaluated--or even titles given poor reviews.

1. If there is no other work of comparable scope, the bibliographer must determine if the needs of the collection are better served by an unknown quantity or by no book at all.

2. If the overall library collection policy calls for comprehensive collecting in a particular subject area, it might be appropriate to purchase titles within that field that might not otherwise meet the reference collection's criteria.

3. Certain titles are of such obvious significance that the library needs to purchase them regardless of any reservations about quality. This is especially the case if the work is of such monumental scope that no comparable works are likely to be published or if the publisher or editor's name is a reasonable guarantee of high quality.

4. When a work is of greatest use within a limited time span, the bibliographer, based on his or her knowledge of the collection and its clientele, may choose to gamble on a title rather than wait for a review, if such a wait is likely to cause too great a delay.

5. In some cases, the bibliographer's own doubts about the quality of a title may be overridden by the urgent need or request of a researcher or instructor for that title. In other cases, it may prove possible to substitute a superior work or otherwise negotiate.

In short, quality remains an essential goal and guideline for the reference collection. The prudent librarian, however, will recognize that quality is elusive, and that no one set of rigid criteria can be followed automatically. The selection process demands a thorough knowledge of publishing trends, a familiarity with the history and the current state of scholarship in different fields, and--perhaps most important--a comprehensive knowledge of one's own institution, its goals and its clientele.

SELECTION NOTES

MATERIALS BY TYPE/FORMAT

1. Almanacs and Yearbooks

We should collect world and national titles (e.g. World Almanac, Whittaker's, Information Please, Hammond, etc.). Since price and space are always considerations, we should collect only for major nations or for those important to the research and curricular needs of Alexander. Preference should be given to English language titles; second preference to works in the major Western European languages; for reference purposes, other languages should be included only if there is some unusual or overriding consideration.

Because of the excellent coverage offered by Statistical Reference Index and the acccompanying microfiche collection, we will make no effort to acquire statistical handbooks or yearbooks except for neighboring states like New York and Pennsylvania. Almanacs with extensive non-statistical data should be acquired, with priority given to neighboring states and states of political and economic prominence (e.g California, Texas, Florida, etc.).

Only the latest edition of almanacs and yearbooks should be kept in reference as a rule; earlier years should be sent to the stacks (or in some cases, to the annex). One exception would be the yearbooks of major encyclopedias, which should be designated latest five years in reference.

2. Bibliographies

Reference should acquire only those of more general interest; others belong in the 4th floor Z collection. We should include, in reference, most national bibliographies held by the library, and we should consider beginning to expand our collection of national bibliographies. Most state and regional bibliographies should go to the stacks. Catalogs of specific collections, like the New York Public, should go to the stacks (though ideally such catalogs would be a part of reference, no room yet exists for such a major addition). Bibliographies of individual authors go to the stacks; bibliographies of the literature of a period or genre or discipline will be designated for Reference unless their scope is especially narrow. Multidisciplinary or discipline-wide bibliographies belong in reference. Sometimes space considerations, local importance of a discipline or subject, or anticipated use will be key criteria.

If a particular bibliography regularly cumulates, only the latest edition should be kept in reference. If a bibliography is not updated by a newer edition, it should be relocated to the stacks, and a newer equivalent sought. In general, a bibliography that is ten or more years old will be suspect. Unless it is an acknowledged classic, like the New Cambridge Bibliography Of English Literature, some consideration should be given to relocating it. Of course the discipline is also an important criterion; older bibliographies in the sciences and social sciences are apt to be less useful than those in the humanities, and thus humanities titles will often be retained longer in reference.

We should purchase the most recent editions of trade bibliographies for the U.S., Europe, and other major countries, as well as worthwhile

international trade bibliographies. To provide coverage of smaller countries, we should look for regional bibliographies. Only the most recent edition of trade bibliographies should be kept in Reference; earlier editions should be designated for stacks, annex or withdrawal. As soon as possible, the collection should acquire some of the major trade bibliographies on CD-ROM; Books in Print and Ulrich's are likely first choices.

3. Biographies

Biographical dictionaries, directories, and encyclopedias are an essential part of the reference collection. We should collect extensively in current and retrospective works. Coverage should include international, national, and U.S. regional. In addition, we should make an effort to collect in professions likely to be of interest to students and researchers at Alexander and to acquire sources that seek to redress previous sexual, racial, or ethnic biases in standard biographical sources.

While some preference should be given to English language titles, high priority must also be given to current and retrospective titles in the major European languages (especially those represented by PhD programs at Rutgers--French, Italian, German, Spanish, and Portuguese). Second priority should be given to native language titles of countries of strong curricular or research interest at the University. We should aim at having the equivalent of the DAB or the DNB for as many countries as possible, starting with English speaking countries (Australia, Canada, India, etc.), the major Western and Eastern European countries, and major Asian, African, and Latin American countries. For smaller countries--and for countries for which there is no major set, we should seek to acquire sets covering several nations.

For the countries of major research and curricular interest, we should seek to acquire more specialized biographical sources--e.g. a biographical dictionary of British feminists, or one covering the Soviet party hierarchy. And for those same countries, some overlap or redundancy in sources is legitimate and desirable.

Current biographical sources should be kept as up-to-date as possible, even for relatively minor countries or groups. Only the most recent edition should be kept in reference. Major retrospective sets should be kept in reference unless they are fully superseded; even then relocation should not be automatic. Supplements to major retrospective sets should be purchased regularly and promptly.

4. Book Review Sources

Alexander Library's reference collection already has a fairly good collection of book review sources--basic sources like Book Review Digest, Book Review Index, Combined Retrospective Index to Book Reviews in Scholarly Journals, Combined Retrospective Index to Book Reviews in Humanities Journals, and Index to Book Reviews in the Humanities, plus a number of more specialized sources designed to keep scholars up to date with new books in their fields (for instance, History: Reviews of Books). These titles should be maintained, and we should seek to add new subject specific titles (especially those that appear on a monthly basis). In

addition, we should seek to acquire notable retrospective indexes (as a hypothetical example, an index to all book reviews appearing in English literary journals of the 17th and 18th centuries) and indexes focusing on new fields (like the recently acquired Software Reviews on File).

Ideally, all ongoing book review indexes should be kept in reference (cancelled titles can be sent to the stacks or the annex as appropriate). If, however, space problems become severe, the more specialized titles should be kept in reference on a latest edition (or latest five years only) basis.

As either comprehensive or specialized book review indexes become available on a CD-ROM format, we should give careful consideration to acquiring them as either a replacement or (more likely) a supplement to the printed sources. This would especially be the case if the CD-ROM format can provide greater timeliness.

5. College Catalogs

Alexander Library does not collect college catalogs in paper copies. Those that are received unsolicited are forwarded to the Career Placement Office on the College Avenue Campus. The library does buy, and should continue to buy, a quite comprehensive collection of catalogs on microfiche--two years of which are kept in the reference area. In addition, the library purchases and maintains a collection of standard guides to colleges--Barrons, Peterson's, the College Blue Book, etc.--a number of more specialized sources, and a variety of titles dealing with financial aid and scholarships. All of these sources should be kept as current as possible, and only the latest edition should be in reference. Earlier editions can be discarded, relocated to stacks, or stored in the annex as deemed appropriate.

6. Concordances and Quotation Dictionaries

Most concordances should be circulating books for the convenience of scholars doing extensive research. The reference collection should maintain duplicate copies of concordances to Shakespeare and the Bible, since these are likely to be needed in reference work.

Reference should keep a current and reasonably comprehensive collection of general quotation books. The present collection, kept up to date, should prove adequate. It will be important, however, to seek out specialized works in emerging areas of interest--for example, a dictionary of feminist quotations or a dictionary of computer quotations.

7. Dictionaries

A. English Language

The reference collection should of course have a comprehensive range of English language dictionaries--unabridged, college, concise, historical, slang, etymological, synonyms, etc. The collection should be kept current; supplements and dictionaries specializing in new terms should be sought out and acquired. A considerable degree of redundancy is necessary, and duplication of major titles, like Webster's Second and

Webster's Third, is quite appropriate--especially given the collection's role as a primary resource for Library School courses in Reference.

Old dictionaries do not quickly lose their value, so caution should be used in relocating dictionaries from the reference collection. It may even be advisable to have several editions of a single title side by side in reference.

B. English-Bilingual

Ideally, the reference collection should have at least one English-bilingual dictionary for all the major and most of the minor languages in the world. For those languages that are neither important to the curriculum or research at Rutgers, nor, from an American perspective at least, of great political, economic, or historical significance, one dictionary should suffice. The greater the perceived importance of a language, the greater the degree of redundancy and comprehensiveness that should be maintained. And for those languages taught at the University, especially those taught in PhD programs, great attention should be paid to maintaining the currency and comprehensiveness of the collection. The library should also acquire bilingual and polyglot dictionaries in subject areas of major research importance to patrons--for example, Education, Library Science, and Computer Science.

C. Foreign Language Dictionaries

Again, the comprehensiveness of the collection should be determined by, first, the research and curricular importance of a language at Rutgers; and second, by its perceived political and historical importance. French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese, for instance, should be represented by a comprehensive and current collection with considerable redundancy--ranging from major multi-volume sets to concise dictionaries to specialized slang or etymological dictionaries. The next priority should be given to other major European languages. Because of the presence of the East Asian Library, the Alexander reference collection need not purchase extensively in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean language dictionaries.

D. Subject Dictionaries

The reference collection should have at least the most authoritaive subject dictionary for all the fields of the humanities and social sciences. Some redundancy will be appropriate in almost all of the fields, and considerable attention must be paid to currency, especially in volatile fields like politics, business, and computer science. Alexander does not need a full array of dictionaries in the scientific or technical fields (except for computer science), but a couple of general or multi-disciplinary titles should be acquired and kept up-to-date for quick reference purposes.

8. Directories

Reference should maintain an extensive and quite current collection of

directories--educational, professional, institutional, and corporate--to support research and curricular needs and to assist the normal professional activities of university faculty and administrators. Priority should be given to directories with wide coverage (e.g Encyclopedia of Associations, The World of Learning, The Million Dollar Directory, or the National Faculty Directory), but when appropriate for research, curricular, or professional needs, more specialized directories (e.g. scholars in a particular field, schools offering certain kinds of training, specialized business directories, etc.) should also be purchased and kept in reference on a latest-edition-reference basis or on a current-edition-only basis. Every effort should be made to ensure the currency of all directories in the collection.

9. Encyclopedias: General

A. English Language

Reference needs a comprehensive and current collection of the major English language multi-volume sets. At present Reference purchases Americana, Britannica, Academic American, World Book, and Colliers; presumably the library will continue to purchase at least these sets. Given the importance of currency, none of these encyclopedias should be more than three years old, and current editions/printings of at least two of the five should be purchased each year on a rotating basis.

Reference should also collect general encyclopedias from the other major English speaking nations--e.g. Canada, Australia, India, etc.--and English language encyclopedias from major non-English speaking nations, especially when the native language is one familiar to few of our faculty and students--e.g. The Great Soviet Encyclopedia or the Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan. In addition, Reference should make some investment in one or two-volume English sets, but the smaller encyclopedias should be a clear second priority.

One area of growing interest is the development of electronic encyclopedias, ones that make use of online or CD-ROM formats to allow students to see and hear as well as read about historical events. Reference should certainly begin to investigate these new technologies. The major concerns thus far would include price and the limited number of people able to use the video encyclopedia at the same time. One option which should be explored is the incorporation of an electronic encyclopedia (and other such reference works) into local area networks already projected for the library system.

B. Foreign Languages

A comprehensive and current collection of encyclopedias in the major foreign languages is essential to a research library. "Major" foreign languages here, as elsewhere in this policy, refer to those languages central to research and instruction at Rutgers. For the languages with doctoral programs (French, German, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese), Reference should provide some redundancy, that is two or three major sets, if available, rather than just one. While it will probably not be possible to keep all of the foreign language sets as up-to-date as the major English language sets, attention should be paid to currency. If a major set is five to ten years old, and there is either a newer edition or

a comparable set that is more current, serious consideration should be given to that purchase.

Languages of the "second rank," for our purposes, refer to languages taught at the University on an undergraduate or master's degree level and languages belonging to a culture or country of considerable political, historical or economic importance. If at all possible, these languages or countries should be represented by a single major set. Other languages or countries should be represented by a one or two-volume set, a regional set, or no set at all.

10. Encyclopedias: Subject

Subject encyclopedias should be selected largely on the same principles as subject dictionaries. The library should purchase the most authoritative and respected multi-volume set in each of the disciplines and important sub-disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. A good deal of redundancy is appropriate for major fields. Sets should be kept up-to-date as much as possible; while at times major sets will not be revised for years at a time (e.g. The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences), it is usually possible to maintain currency by purchasing either new major sets or smaller, recent sets.

Subjects covered by other libraries in the system, like Art and Music, in general require less comprehensive coverage at Alexander. Our aim should be to provide good basic coverage rather than the more specialized coverage needed in an area like literature, history, education, or sociology. In the sciences, one major set, the McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science and Technology, should suffice. One-volume encyclopedias can be purchased as seems necessary--especially in interdisciplinary fields--but great caution should be exercised in making larger purchases.

11. Geographical Sources

Geographical materials include atlases, gazetteers, and maps. Reference should attempt to purchase and maintain a current and comprehensive collection of international, foreign national, and U.S national and state atlases. Historical and thematic atlases should be purchased for reference only if they are American or international in scope; others should be located in the stacks. There should be considerable redundancy in the international and U.S. atlases, and these areas should be the most important--and the easiest--to keep current. Since it will probably not be possible, or even desirable, to acquire atlases for every nation, priority should be given to those countries most important to research and instruction at the University, and secondarily, to those of greatest historical, political, and economic interest to the United States.

At present there is no significant collection of state atlases. If works of this kind are available, it would be wise to acquire atlases for the near-by states and those of major political and economic importance in the United States.

The practice at Alexander has been that most specialized atlases are designated for the circulating collections rather than Reference. Exceptions can and should be made if a special topic is of major interest to Rutgers researchers.

A large number of maps in Alexander Library are part of the Government Documents collection and thus do not fall into the scope of this policy. Those maps within the reference collection mostly include local county maps, state road maps, maps of some U.S. and foreign cities, and some foreign national maps. Our priority should be to maintain a complete, current, and useable collection of local road maps and state maps, but it would also be wise to begin improving the foreign map collection as well, where little has been done in recent years.

Several comprehensive and current gazetteers should be available in Reference. The priority order should be international, United States, and foreign national.

12. Handbooks

A current and comprehensive collection of handbooks should be maintained for the various disciplines and significant sub-disciplines within the social sciences and humanities. Annual titles should be placed on standing order to facilitate updating. The reference bibliographer should be aware of both new titles within traditional disciplines and titles within new and emerging disciplines. Handbooks in the sciences need not be acquired, except for unusual cases--e.g. the Physicians' Desk Reference.

13. Indexes

Reference should of course maintain a current and comprehensive collection of indexes and abstracts within the humanities and social sciences. General interest indexes (like Reader's Guide) should also be collected, but Reference need not purchase any science indexes. Priority should be given first to indexes covering the periodical literature pertinent to major research programs in the Graduate School and the different professional schools served by Alexander Library, and second to indexes covering the periodical literature pertinent to the curricular needs of undergraduate programs in the humanities and social sciences.

It is desirable to expand the library's collection as new and worthwhile indexes appear, and as new programs are emphasized in the University, but the problems of constantly rising fixed costs and the major commitment of space to an ongoing title will upon occasion serve as an unavoidable curb on the enthusiastic bibliographer. In some cases, the space problem can be alleviated by shelving only a limited number of volumes in reference (for instance the latest ten years) and locating earlier years in the stacks, but of course such an approach does not solve the space problem; it merely passes the problem on to someone else.

While the bulk of indexes will of course be in English, Reference does need to provide access to the periodical literature of other nations, and this obligation will necessarily imply the acquisition and maintenance of major indexes in non-English languages. At this point, priority, as always, should be given to the major European languages. It is probable that most non-English language indexes will be used infrequently enough to make shelving only the latest five or ten years in the reference stacks appropriate.

Since newspapers are a key resource for researchers in fields like History, Political Science, and Urban Studies, the library should maintain

and expand its collection of newspaper indexes. While the anticipated purchase subscription to the NEWSBANK indexes and microfiche will significantly extend access to U.S. papers, more attention should be paid to acquiring indexes for significant foreign newspapers. Thus far only the Times of London Index, the Guardian Index, and the index to Le Monde are available here. Consideration should be given to acquiring indexes, where available, to major European, Latin American, and Asian papers.

The availability of periodical indexing in online and CD-ROM formats is of course a crucial development in the library's attempt to provide prompt access to information. As yet, it is unlikely that these new formats will replace printed indexes at Alexander; instead they will serve as a welcome complement to the traditional sources. But it is possible that at some point, budgetary constraints may force choices. In such a contingency, decisions should be based not on the novelty or venerability of any source, nor simply on the price, but on the quality and reliability of its indexing, the currency of the information, and its availability to the greatest number of users.

Since Alexander Library will no longer have responsibility for the major business collection in the New Brunswick campuses, the Reference Collection will shortly drop its subscription to several more specialized business indexes and maintain only Business Periodicals Index.

14. Legal Materials

Given the existence of two law libraries within the Rutgers system and the presence of an excellent document collection at Alexander, the general reference collection need contain relatively few legal materials except for basic dictionaries, encyclopedias, collections of constitutions, and other handy compendiums. These materials should be maintained and kept current.

15. Library Catalogs

As a research library, Alexander needs at least a basic collection of printed or microform catalogs of major research libraries. At present this collection is split, rather confusingly, between the reference room on the first floor and the folio area on the third. Ideally, these two locations should be consolidated to decrease confusion and increase use.

Because computers are increasingly providing the means of access to the holdings of libraries or groups of libraries, the University Library should probably reach a system-wide consensus on whether or not to invest further in expensive and space-consuming printed catalogs (if indeed such catalogs continue to be published). Until such a decision is reached, Reference should limit itself to maintaining the current collection (buying supplements and trying to consolidate the divided collections) unless there is pressing demand for a particular item.

16. Phone Books

Alexander has an extensive collection of U.S. phone books. Paper copies of New Jersey books and some from a few of the larger metropolitan areas are available in paper, but the bulk of the collection consists of

Phonefiche. Reference purchases fiche copies for metropolitan areas throughout the country. The present level of coverage seems adequate for research and curricular needs. There is, however, no coverage for foreign cities at present, though in the past Reference had paper copies for perhaps twenty major cities. It might be worthwile to reconsider the purchase of foreign phonebooks--perhaps on a rotating basis--and to see if comparable universities generally acquire them.

17. Sacred Books

At present, Reference only provides some basic translations of the the Hebrew Bible, the Christian New Testament, and the Koran. The English translations include the King James and a few of the other recognized versions. These sacred works are supplemented by dictionaries, encyclopedias, atlases, concordances, and basic commentaries.

It should be emphasized that the inclusion or exclusion of the sacred works of any particular tradition from the reference collection does not constitute either an endorsement or a denigration of that tradition. Inclusion or exclusion is based merely on the library's past experience of the likelihood of sacred works being used for reference purposes by the patrons of this library. Should the pattern of reference use change, other sacred books should be added as needed.

18. Style Manuals

The reference collection should include multiple copies of all basic style manuals in the humanities and social sciences--MLA, Chicago, Turabian, APA, etc. At least one copy of each of the most heavily used manuals should be kept in the ready reference collection at the desk.

19. Theses and Dissertation Access

The reference collection currently includes Dissertation Abstracts International, Masters Abstracts, American Doctoral Dissertations, and several lists with a national or discipline focus. These titles should be maintained, and additional national and discipline titles should be considered. If any lists of dissertation research-in-progress are available for disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, they should be acquired and kept in reference on a "latest five years in reference" basis.

With the recent subscription to the Dissertation Abstracts CD-ROM, the library is considering cancelling its subscription to the paper format. If, as expected, the subscription is cancelled, the library will maintain at least the pre-1980 volumes (since the CD-ROM format does not include abstracts for pre-1980 dissertations. These volumes, however, might be removed from reference to a less prominent location within the library.

It should be noted that access to foreign doctoral dissertations is available through the Center for Research Libraries.

20. Updating Services

Given the seemingly endless demand for current information in business, politics, foreign affairs, journalism, government, etc., the proliferation of "updating services" is an important concern for a reference collection. Most of these sources, which appear on a weekly or monthly basis, attempt to summarize the latest developments--for the world in general (Facts on File, Keesing's), for a particular region (ISLA, African Recorder), government (CQ Weekly, World Elections on File), business (Value Line, Moody's News Reports), the press (Editorials on File), public opinion (Gallup Polls), and tax information (services from Prentice Hall and Commerce Clearing House). The library will probably need to maintain all of these sources, and as newer ones become available in appropriate areas, serious consideration should be given to their purchase.

Given the raison d'etre of such services--currency of information--online and CD-ROM formats may prove attractive alternatives to printed sources. As always the key criteria will be the quality of information; the actual, as opposed to advertised, currency; and access to the data (e.g. how many people can use the service at the same time).

A Note on Electronic Formats

Reference sources in electronic formats, like online databases and CD-ROMs, have the potential to change the traditional reference collection radically. Whole encyclopedias are now available in these formats, and offer the possiblity of visual and aural supplements to the printed texts--instead of just reading about Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech, one can now watch and listen to the speech itself. The entire text of the King James Bible is now online, as are the contents of many magazines and newspapers. It is not hard to imagine a time in the next few years when the standard reference sources, dictionaries, encyclopedias, directories, etc., are primarily available in machine-readable formats.

The impact of these new technologies has already been felt in the reference collection at Alexander Library. For at least seven years, the library has been offering searches of online bibliographic databases through its ROARS program (Rutgers Online Automated Retrieval Service). In many cases, the databases searched are the online equivalents of standard printed indexes--ERIC, PSYCHINFO, MLA, DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS ONLINE, etc. In other cases, the databases are brand new, made feasible only by the advent of computers and telecommunications networks. As yet, however, online searching has proved only a limited supplement to printed indexes--and only for a limited number of people. The drawback of course is cost. Each search costs money, for time online, for telecommunication charges, and for the number of citations. The expense, coupled with the inability of the library to subsidize searching for members of the university community, means that online searching, of both bibliographic and full-text databases, is likely to remain a limited supplement to printed sources, used by a relatively small portion of the university community. Thus, at least within an educational setting, online searching has not had the revolutionary impact the technolgy would seem to warrant.

The development of CD-ROM technology, however, may in fact revolutionize the reference collection, in a way online searching has not, because of the difference in the ongoing expense. With online searching, each and every search is an additional expense. With the CD-ROM, the library must make an initial investment in hardware, but then it only pays for each new disc received--much as it now pays for each new edition of an index or encyclopedia. While the expense is apt to be greater than that of the traditional printed source, it seems likely that the library can win funding, and NOT have to pass the entire cost along to the patron

Alexander Reference has begun to make a substantial investment in CD-ROM technology, with subscriptions to MLA Bibliography, Social Sciences Index, Dissertation Abstracts, ERIC, and InfoTrack already initiated and additional ones anticipated. At this time, it is appropriate to articulate some of the criteria by which we should evaluate new products.

1 Currency:

What is the lag time between the publication of an item and its appearance in a CD-ROM index? The lag time should be no greater than

that in a printed index; ideally, it should be significantly less. Similarly, how frequently are non-bibliographic CD-ROM sources updated. Again, one should expect automated formats to be updated more frequently tha traditional printed sources; if they are not, a considerable portion of their attractiveness is lost.

2. Ease of Access:

A good CD-ROM index should feature most or all of the multiple access points of online searching--author, title, title word, and subject descriptors; limiting by date, or language, or document type; and Boolean logic connectors. Infotrack is, in this regard, a fairly primitive and limited tool. When several comparable CD-ROM sources are available, ease of access should be a key criterion in making a selection. For non-bibliographic CD-ROM sources, similar ease of access is also desirable.

3. Multiple Users

How many people can use a CD-ROM source at one time? If only one at a time, the library faces the possibility of long lines, user discontent, or the need to maintain a costly double subscription to both printed and automated sources. Reference should look for sources that permit multiple users, or that are flexible enough to permit interchange of hardware and software between two or more sets.

4. Quality of Contents

Reference should not purchase a CD-ROM format simply because it is the latest thing in information technology. The new format should be subject to all the usual criteria of quality and appropriateness to the needs of the faculty and students using Alexander Library. We should remember that a good printed source might well be superior to a bad automated one.

5. Cost

While cost should not be the main criterion for purchasing (or leasing) a new reference source, it is an inescapeable one. It might be appropriate for Reference to seek additional funding for automated formats, so that their purchase does not decrease available book funds. We should aggressively seek the best prices and try to arrange cooperative purchases with the other Rutgers libraries in order to reduce prices. In some cases, it might be appropriate to cancel a print subscription, but it would be wise to do so only after the automated format has proven its quality and reliability, and Reference has had a chance to monitor demand.

6. Ownership

Will the library retain ownership of disks so that we can provide access to earlier years of an index or earlier editions of a non-bibliographic source. Clearly we should prefer services that do not require us to turn in older disks or to pay additional charges to retain them. As a research library, Alexander needs an ongoing collection, not merely the most recent materials.

7. Durability

A CD-ROM format that meets all of these criteria but is unavailable half the time because of hardware or software problems is no bargain. We should have rigorous standards for actual performance, keep in close contact with customer service personnel, and seek new vendors when our standards are not met.

SELECTION NOTES--BY SUBJECT

This section of the Reference Collection Policy will contain a variety of notes on our past, present, and future acquisition patterns in different subject areas. The notes will vary considerably in length and detail; at first, most will merely offer brief and very general guidelines, but as more work is done evaluating the collection and determining its future shape, it will become possible to offer fairly detailed information on what to purchase in particular areas and where the collection needs to be strengthened. More notes will be added in the future, especially as subject bibliographers complete collection policies for their areas.

In general terms, a reference collection can be seen as serving two main purposes: first, providing factual answers to a wide range of questions; and, second, providing bibliographic access to the library's collections (books, serials, manuscripts, etc.) and to the collections of other libraries. In attempting to achieve the first of these purposes, the reference bibliographer(s) can operate with a fair amount of autonomy, for the reference collection, viewed from this perspective, is itself a somewhat autonomous collection. The desk experience of the reference librarians is frequently the best guide to the reference sources required by the library. There are, of course, definite limits to this autonomy; the bibliographer must keep in mind the mission of the library and should consult with colleagues within the library and the teaching faculty when appropriate.

In seeking to achieve the second goal, however, it is important to stress another aspect of the reference collection--its relationship with the rest of the collection. Here, the purpose of the reference collection is not to answer questions so much as to provide access to the larger universe of research materials. A substantial portion of the Alexander Reference collection is comprised of indexes, abstracts, and bibliographies, and in the selection of such materials the active cooperation of the subject bibliographers is simply essential. The reference bibliographer cannot provide adequate support for the collection as a whole without a clear sense of the goals of each individual bibliographer and the overall goals of the library. Simply put, the most important role of a reference collection in a research library is to provide access to the collections developed by the subject bibliographers. And in this sense, the reference bibliographer is not at all autonomous; rather, he or she is the agent of the subject bibliographer.

Perhaps an example will clarify the point. If a subject bibliographer, responding to new emphases at the University, decides to improve in a significant way the serial collection in computer literature, the role of the reference bibliographer is to ascertain whether indexes currently held in the library give adequate access to the expanded journal collection. If access is not adequate, steps should be taken to improve it by seeking out and acquiring the best and most appropriate index. In short, the reference bibliographer should fully support the collection activities of the subject specialists.

The presence of the Art Library naturally limits Alexander's responsibilities for collecting in the area of Art History. Given the proximity of the Art Library (a few blocks away) and the expense of Art materials, there is little reason to duplicate an excellent collection. Alexander's reference collection in Art, therefore, is primarily a ready reference collection.

1. We will maintain one major encyclopedic set (currently The Encyclopedia of World Art), some one-volume dictionaries and encyclopedias of general or interdisciplinary interest, and some basic biographical sources.

2. We will make no effort to acquire extensive bibliographic sources, more specialized reference works, catalogs, or directories, nor will we explore electronic formats.

3. Alexander Reference staff should familiarize themselves with the materials available at the Art Library in order to provide appropriate referrals, or to contact the Art Reference desk themselves to obtain information for patrons.

The establishment in 1987 of a School of Business on the New Brunswick campus seems likely to alter drastically Alexander Library's collection policy in Business. Until that time Alexander had served as the principal business collection in the New Brunswick area, collecting primarily on an instructional level, while the Dana Library in Newark has served as the primary research level collection for the university's business programs, including the Graduate School of Managment. After the establishment of the School of Business in New Brunswick, it seemed possible that the Alexander collections would need to be substanitally increased to support instruction and research in areas like accounting, managment, marketing, etc., but as of this writing (Spring of 1989), responsibility for library support of the new school has been assigned to the Kilmer Area Library. It is now likely that in the next few years, Alexander will in fact begin to reduce its business collections, shifting journals and monographs to the Kilmer Area Library or cancelling subscriptions.

As a result, Alexander Reference will begin to decrease its business collections. Negotiations are under way to determine the transfer of certain titles, and while no final conclusions have been reached, the following guidelines are likely to be implemented. Alexander will not increase its present holdings in annual reports (the Fortune 500 from Disclosure, Inc.) nor will we seek to expand into additional SEC filings. We will not seek out new business indexes either in electronic or print format; in fact we are likely to transfer or cancel all but Business Periodicals Index. We will maintain our present collection of basic directories (e.g. Million Dollar Directory, Standard & Poor's Register of Corporations) but additional directories will be a low priority at best. For general reference purposes we will maintain the Moody's manuals and some other sources of basic corporate data. We will also maintain basic dictionaries and biographical sources, but avoid most of the more specialized sources. Priority will be given to those areas in business of greatest interest to the Political Science and Economics programs still supported at a research level in Alexander.

KM
5/30/89

Alexander Library serves as the principal support for research and instruction in the Graduate School of Education (GSE). As such, the collection aims to be comprehensive--although funding in the past has not always allowed full attainment of this aim. Students of GSE comprise one of the most active groups of library users and in particular are frequent patrons of the Reference Desk. The Reference Collection, therefore, strives to provide a comprehensive collection of factual and bibliographic sources in the field of Education, with special emphasis on the research needs of doctoral candidates and the faculty.

To determine how well the reference collection was fulfilling the needs of its users, the Information Services Department decided to conduct an evaluation, based on a number of standard bibliographies. Those selected were Eugene Sheehy's Guide to Reference Books (10th edition, 1986, including books published through 1984 plus a few 1985 titles); ARBA Guide to Education (published in 1985 and including imprints from 1970 to 1984); American Reference Books Annual, 1986 (covering books published in 1985); and American Reference Books Annual, 1987 (covering books published in 1986). Sheehy's and the ARBA Guide are both selective--the ARBA Guide indicates that 452 "important" titles were culled from the 1200 books included in the annual volumes from 1970 to 1985, and while Sheehy's does not specify its criteria, its inclusion of fewer than 75% of the titles in the ARBA Guide would certainly suggest something less than comprehensiveness. The two annual volumes, on tne other hand, are more comprehensive in their scope, which should be kept in mind when analyzing the results.

Multiple sources were used for two reasons--to create a larger universe of titles and to use one bibliography to check on the other. Since the two major checking sources yielded similar, though not identical, results, there is good reason to accept their general reliability.

To ascertain our holdings, we checked RLIN (Research Libraries Information Network), IRIS (the online circulation system), the card catalog, the Rutgers Union List of Serials, the catalog of government publications (and in a few instances standard document bibliographies like the Monthly Catalog), and, in a few ambiguous cases, the shelf list or the serials check-in file. I am grateful to Mary Alice Baish, George Cooke, Scott Hercher, and Yeung Yeung Yu (information assistants at Alexander Library) for their assistance in doing some of the holdings checks.

The four sources checked yielded a total of 785 titles (minus those titles listed in Sheehy's which had already been counted in the ARBA Guide). The statistics given in this report represent the universe of 785 titles, plus subtotals representing the four individual bibliographies checked--452 from ARBA, 316 from Sheehy's (here including the duplicates culled out for the overall total), 67 from the 1986 annual, and 79 from the 1987 annual. In each case I have provided breakdowns--by numbers and percentages--of the books located in Reference (Ref), those located in the stacks of the circulating collection (St), those located in the Alexander government documents collection (Doc), a subtotal of the Alexander holdings (Alex), those not owned by Alexander but available elsewhere in the Rutgers system (O), the total owned by Rutgers (RUL), and, finally, those not owned anywhere at Rutgers (NO).

Table 1: All Titles Checked

	TOTAL	REF	ST	DOC	ALEX	O	RUL	NO
#	785	237	234	38	509	73	582	203
%*	100%	30%	30%	5%	65%	9%	74%	26%

* All percentages rounded off to the nearest whole number throughout this report.

Table 2: Titles from ARBA Guide

	TOTAL	REF	ST	DOC	ALEX	O	RUL	NO
#	452	143	124	25	292	48	340	112
%	100%	32%	27%	6%	65%	11%	75%	25%

Table 3: Titles from Sheehy's

	TOTAL	REF	ST	DOC	ALEX	O	RUL	NO
#	316	105	101	19	225	29	254	62
%	100%	33%	32%	6%	71%	9%	80%	20%

Table 4: Titles from 1986 & 1987 Annual Volumes

	TOTAL	REF	ST	DOC	ALEX	O	RUL	NO
1986#	67	19	12	0	31	9	40	27
1986%	100%	28%	18%	0%	46%	13%	60%	40%
1987#	79	31	22	1	54	7	61	18
1987%	100%	39%	28%	1%	68%	9%	77%	23%
2 yr. #	146	50	34	1	85	16	101	45
2 yr. %	100%	34%	23%	1%	58%	11%	69%	31%

The three most important standards of comparison would be our holdings checked against the combined bibliographies, our holdings checked against the ARBA Guide, and our holdings checked against Sheehy's (Tables 1-3). These checks yield fairly consistent figures: Alexander owns 65% of the total titles checked, 65% of those from the ARBA Guide, and 71% of those from Sheehy's. RUL owns 74% of the total titles, 75% of the ARBA Guide's, and 80% of the Sheehy's titles. While inferring quality from quantity is, of course, notoriously difficult, it seems safe to say that Alexander and Rutgers University Libraries own a respectable proportion of the education reference literature.

The two-year total from the annual volumes might at first seem to imply a disturbing downward trend, but I suspect that any of several factors might tell against such a conclusion. First, the 1986 annual

volume covers 1985 imprints, a year in which there was a measure of administrative and political uncertainty in the Rutgers Library system--i. e. we had a bad year and it affected our collections. The second argument might support the first: our record for 1986 imprints (as reflected in the 1987 annual) is right in line with the figures from Tables 1-3. Third, the annual volumes, as suggested above, are less selective than the other bibliographies checked. My own admittedly subjective impression is that a good number of the 1985 books not acquired should not have been acquired.

In addition to the overall figures for each of the bibliographies, I also did breakdowns by the type of work--e.g. bibliographies, dictionaries, encyclopedias, etc. For the sake of brevity, these tables are not included, but some of the results are suggestive. For example, ARBA Guide is divided into 12 chapters in 3 parts. Parts 1 & 2 cover what I would call general reference books--bibliographies, indexes, library catalogs, dictionaries & encyclopedias, directories, yearbooks, and handbooks--while Part 3 focuses on what the guide itself calls "Special Topics," areas like bilingual and minority education, dissertations and theses, reading, instructional media, and special education.

Alexander owns 69% of the general tools but only 59% of the specialized ones. Similarly, RUL owns 80% of the general titles but only 69% of the specialized. Our holdings are especially poor in Special Education (43% and 57%) and in Dissertations and Theses (54% and 54%). Such figures suggest where we may need to increase our resources. (Interestingly enough, we have added, since the time this study was conducted, several major new sources in Special Education). On the other hand, our holdings of dictionaries and encyclopedias are 85% for Alexander and 90% for RUL.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Alexander has a narrower definition of reference books than any of the bibliographies consulted. Fewer than half of the "Reference" books owned are actually in the Reference area. This tendency is probably attributable both to space limitations and to the practice of cataloging most specialized bibliographies to the 4th floor Z collection. While there are obvious disadvantages to such a split, there is not, nor is there likely to be, adequate space for a wholesale relocation of bibliographies and other "reference" tools to the reference area--even if all the librarians thought such a switch were desirable. At best we can initiate some individual relocations in cases where both the Education bibliographer and the Reference bibliographer agree that switches are appropriate.

2. All in all, the Education Reference collection seems in good shape. A number of areas need, and have started to receive, additional attention--special education, directories of non-print sources. The collection is weak in sources published in, or covering the educational literature of, other countries, especially non-English speaking countries. This evaluation has also allowed us to identify and purchase newer editions of some key sources.

3. Perhaps the real value of such an examination of part of the collection cannot be easily quantified. The careful attention to the collection demanded by such a study allows the bibliographer to identify gaps and out-of-date materials, to identify and acquire useful sources not previously owned, and to have a far better sense of how to collect in the future.

4/88

As with Art, the existence of a specialized Music Library within the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Libraries reduces Alexander's need to collect either sound recordings, serials, or monographs in Music History, Performance, or Theory. Thus the reference responsibilities at Alexander are primarily to meet the needs of students and researchers for basic factual information.

1. To this end Reference includes the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, the Grove Dictionary of American Music, a number of basic dictionaries, companions, and biographical sources. Major emphasis is given to providing ready reference sources for students and researchers doing interdisciplinary work--e.g. a one-volume history of jazz or rock music for students of American culture.

2. We will not acquire bibliographic sources or discographies beyond a basic guide to sound recordings like Schwann.

3. Reference staff should be familiar with the resources of the Music Library so that they are able to make referrals or contact the Music staff to assist Alexander patrons.

Subject Notes--Philosophy

Philosophy was chosen as the first subject area for evaluation for several reasons: it is the first specific subject in the LC classification scheme; philosophy is one of the doctoral programs served by Alexander Library; and, more practically, the philosophy collection in reference is relatively small and discrete--thus allowing for a certain amount of experimentation in assessment methods. The bibliography chosen as the checking tool is Hans Bynagle's Philosophy: A Guide to the Reference Literature (1986). Bynagle's list offers coverage of publications through August, 1985, and has the advantage of a narrow focus on reference items only. In addition to Bynagle, the 1986 edition of Sheehy's and ARBA's Best Reference Books, 1981-86 were also checked.

From Bynagle, a set of 220 works were checked. What follows is a series of tables describing our holdings; per cent figures, where appropriate, are given parenthetically.

Table 1: Holdings

Total checked	Alex Ref.	Alex Stacks	Alex Total	Not owned
220	56 (25%)	76 (35%)	132 (60%)	88 (40%)

One immediate observation is possible. It seems likely that Alexander Library has a relatively narrow working definition of reference books. While we own 60% of the books checked, only 25% of the total (and less than half of those we own) are in reference. The rest form part of the circulating collection. And this data confirms the impressions of the reference bibliographer.

Breakdown by Format

Type	Total	Ref.	Stacks	Alex owns	N.O.
General Lit.	10	4	2	6 (60%)	4
General Dicts, Ency.	31	15	3	18 (58%)	13
Special Dicts, Ency.	50	10	18	28 (56%)	22
Gen. Indexes Abstracts, & Serial Bibs	10	6	3	9 (90%)	1
Gen. Bibs.	11	4	6	10 (91%)	1
Spec. Bibs: Schools, Periods	54	8	25	33 (61%)	21
Spec. Bibs: countries	28	3	8	11 (39%)	17

Table 2 (cont'd)

Type	Total	Ref.	Stacks	Alex owns	N.O.
Directories & Biographies	10	3	2	5 (50%)	5
Miscellaneous	16	3	9	12 (75%)	4
Totals	220	56	76	132 (60%)	88

Our collection seems strong in general indexes and bibliographies, adequate in most other areas, but weakest in specialized bibliographies of other countries. It can also be observed that relatively few specialized bibliographies or dictionaries owned by Alexander are located in the reference collection.

Table 3, Breakdown by Language

Language	Total	Alex Ref.	Alex Stacks	Alex Total	N.O.
English	156	45	57	102	54
German	22	3	9	12	10
French	17	4	5	9	8
Italian	5	0	1	1	4
Spanish	6	1	0	1	5
Russian	4	0	0	0	4
Polyglot	8	3	4	7	1
Dutch	1	0	0	0	1
Polish	1	0	0	0	1
Total	220	56	76	132	88

Alexander owns 65% of the English language titles, 54% of the German language titles, and 53% of the French language titles. For the other languages, our holdings are minimal.

Table 4, Holdings by Publication Date

Years	Total	Alex Ref.	Alex Stacks	Alex Total	N.O.
1901-1920	3	3	0	3 (100%)	0
1921-1940	6	0	4	4 (67%)	2
1941-1950	3	1	1	2 (67%)	1
1951-1960	19	4	9	13 (68%)	6
1961-1970	62	13	16	29 (48%)	33
1971-1980	41	9	19	28 (68%)	13
1976-1980	31	11	11	22 (71%)	9
1981-1985	38	8	12	20 (53%)	18
Ongoing Serial	13	4	3	7 (54%)	6
Completed Serial	4	3	1	4 (100%)	0
Total	220	56	76	132 (60%)	88

In most periods, Alexander seems to have acquired 2/3s or more of what is listed in Bynagle as having been published in a particular period. The exceptions, unfortunately, include the most recent period checked, 1981 to 1985.

To avoid relying too heavily on one source, I also checked Sheehy's (10th edition, 1986) and ARBA's Best Reference Books, 1981-85. ARBA offered no titles not included in Bynagle and can be discounted. Of the the 98 titles listed in Sheehy's Alexander owns 60 or 61%. Interestingly this % is almost identical to the % of titles in Bynagle owned by Alexander, but there is one considerable difference. 36% of the total titles are located in Reference (as opposed to 25% in Bynagle) and 25% in the stacks (as opposed to 35% in Bynagle). This discrepancy might suggest that the Alexander definition of reference books is closer to Sheehy's than to Bynagle's.

Of the 98 titles listed in Sheehy 78 are also listed in Bynagle. Of the 20 not listed in Bynagle, only five are owned by Alexander--all located in the stacks. Of the 15 titles not owned 14 are foreign language titles (8 in German, 4 in Spanish, and 1 each in Italian and French). Another breakdown indicates that of the 15 titles not owned, 5 are general dictionaries or encyclopedias, 1 is an international bibliography, and the other 9 are national bibliographies--including two German language bibliographies of dissertations, and national bibliographies from Belgium (in French), Colombia, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Spain, and Switzerland (in German).

The conclusions that can be drawn from a quantitative study are limited. At this point I would especially hesitate to evaluate the quality of the collection based on the present statistics. For one thing, mere inclusion in a bibliography like Sheehy or Bynagle is not a guarantee that a particular work is of lasting value or indeed of any value to the users of a particular library. Quite a few of the books listed by Bynagle are described by him as having only marginal value. Others have been largely superseded by later works. Thus the fact that Alexander owns 60% of the books in Bynagle does not mean that the library owns only 60% of the Philosophy reference works that it should own. Any retrospective purchasing, therefore, should be done with an eye to the quality of the the titles under consideration and not just to swell our statistics.

Nevertheless, this study has, I think, some value as a description of what past acquisition practices have been. Clearly Alexander has purchased a considerable portion of the reference works available in Philosophy. Numerically, at least, the library is strongest in general bibliographies and periodical indexes (and I suspect that this is qualitatively true as well), reasonably strong in general and specialized dictionaries and encyclopedias, and fairly weak in specialized bibliographies--especially those dealing with the philosophical literature of other countries. Naturally the Alexander collection is strongest in English language sources, has a good selection of polyglot sources, a representative selection of German and French language sources, but little in other languages.

The assessment also provides some information for retrospective selection--including in a few instances the purchase of more recent editions of the standard English and foreign language sources. And finally it provides initial confirmation of my impression of our reference selection practice--we concentrate on the more general encyclopedias, dictionaries, handbooks, indexes, bibliographies, and biographical sources, usually leaving the more specialized sources for the circulating collection.

KM
2/87
rev. 6/87

The Alexander Library Reference Collection will include only those works of scientific reference that meet one of the following criteria.

1. The work is of general reference value even within a collection that specifically does not serve the sciences. Examples would include the McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science & Technology, basic scientific dictionaries (preferably those covering several disciplines), directories or biographical works of general interest (e.g. American Men and Women of Science)

2. The work covers a field important for interdisciplinary research--e.g. basic works on environment that might be of value to political science or economics researchers or a few works on clinical psychology or psychiatry for education or pyschology researchers.

3. The work covers a field that is of itself important to the mission of Alexander Library--e.g. works on computer science, especially software and applications.

Appendix 1

Graduate Programs Served by Alexander Library

Agricultural Economics*--M Anthropology--M, D
Art History*--M, D Classics--M, D
Communications#--M Comparative Literature--M, D
Economics--M, D English--M, D
French--M, D Geography--M, D
German--M, D History--M, D
Industrial Relations & Human
Resources*--M Labor Studies*--M
Music*--M, D Philosophy--M, D
Political Science--M, D Psychology*--M, D
Social Work$--D Sociology--M, D
Spanish--M, D Urban Planning and Policy
Development*--M, D

Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology*--D
Graduate School of Education--M, D
Graduate School of Social Work$--M, D
School of Communication, Information and Library Studies--M, D

M----------Master's Degree
D----------Doctoral Degree

*----------Programs served primarily (though not exclusively) by other libraries in the New Brunswick area--e.g. Music, IMLR, Art, LSM.
#----------A brand new graduate program, just approved by the University.
$----------PhD Program administered jointly by the Graduate School in New Brunswick and the Graduate School of Social Work.

Appendix 2

Programs of Study for Liberal Arts Students

in New Brunswick

Majors

Accounting
Africana Studies
Anthropology
Art*
Chinese*
Communication
Computer Science*
Economics
French
German

Hebraic Studies
Italian
Labor Studies*
Linguistics
Marketing
Music*
Philosophy
Portuguese
Puerto Rican Studies
Religion
Slavic & East European Studies
Sociology
Speech, Language & Hearing Sciences*
Urban Studies*

Administration of Justice
American Studies
Archaeology
Art History*
Classics
Comparative Literature
Dance*
English
Geography
Health, Physical Education & Sport Studies*
History
Journalism & Mass Media
Latin American Studies
Management
Middle Eastern Studies
Oriental Languages & Area Studies*
Political Science
Psychology*
Recreation & Leisure Services*
Russian

Social Work
Spanish

Theater Arts*
Women's Studies*

Minors & Certificate Programs

Asian Studies*
Education#
Gerontology
Military Education*

Criminology#
Film Studies*
Medieval Studies
Soviet & East European Area Studies

* Programs served to a greater or lesser extent by another New Brunswick library.

Certificate Programs